

PART S: CONFERENCES

C4950 CONFERENCE PLANNING (FTR PART 301-74)

A. Authority. OMB Bulletin No. 93-11, dated 19 April 1993, To The Heads of Executive Departments and Establishments, Subject: Fiscal Responsibility and Reducing Perquisites, Attachment 5.

B. Policy. (FTR §301-74.1) The public interest requires that the Uniformed Services exercise strict fiscal responsibility when selecting conference sites. Accordingly, the Services shall select conference sites that minimize conference costs. When Service representatives attend conferences sponsored by others, the Service must keep its representation to a minimum consistent with serving the public's interest.

C. Scope and Coverage. This guidance applies to all Executive Departments, agencies and the Uniformed Services that sponsor conferences or pay for travel to conferences. In addition to conference travel by employees, this guidance applies to conference travel paid for persons invited to travel in support of Service programs.

*D. Definitions

1. Conference: A meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium or event that involves attendee travel. Also applies to training activities that are conferences under 5 CFR 410.404. ***NOTE: This does not include regularly scheduled courses of instruction conducted at a Government or commercial training facility.***

2. Conference Costs: All costs paid by the Government for a conference, whether paid directly or reimbursed by DoD Agencies. Examples include:

- a. Attendee's travel costs (i.e., travel to and from the conference, ground transportation, lodging, meals and incidental costs);
- b. Attendee's time costs (i.e., the cost of attendee's time spent at the conference and traveling to and from the conference);
- c. Meeting room and audiovisual costs;
- d. Registration fees;
- e. Speaker fees;
- f. Conference-related administrative fees; and
- g. Similar costs.

3. Conference Lodging Allowance: The lodging allowance that is up to 25 percent above (rounded up to the next higher dollar) the established geographical lodging portion of the per diem rate. The M&IE portion of the per diem allowance remains unchanged.

4. Site: Refers to both the geographical location and the specific facility selected.

E. Actions Required. (FTR §301-74.3) When planning a conference DoD Agencies must:

- 1. Determine which conference expenditures provide the greatest advantage to the Government; by
 - a. Ensuring appropriate management oversight of the conference planning process;
 - b. Performing cost comparisons of the size, scope, and location;

- c. Determining if a Government facility is available at a lesser rate;
 - d. Considering conference alternatives, e.g., teleconferencing;
 - e. Maintaining written documentation of the alternatives considered and the selection rationale use; and
 - f. Minimizing cost by exercising strict fiscal responsibility in determining the best site.
2. Minimize the conference administrative costs;
 3. Minimize the attendees' travel costs;
 4. Minimize the attendees' time costs;
 5. Use Government-owned or Government provided facilities as much as possible;
 6. Identify ways to save costs in selecting a particular conference site (e.g., lower rates during the off-season); and
 7. Develop and establish internal policies that ensure these standards are met.

NOTE: Individuals must have the requisite contracting authority to obligate the Government in connection with conference arrangements.

F. Cost Considerations. (FTR §301-74.2) When planning a conference, DoD Agencies should consider all direct and indirect conference costs paid by the Government. Conference costs to be considered include:

1. Travel and per diem expenses;
2. Rent of rooms for official business;
3. Usage of audiovisual and other equipment;
4. Computer and telephone access fees;

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5. Light refreshments for morning, afternoon, or evening breaks excludes alcoholic beverages and includes: coffee, tea, milk, juice, soft drinks, donuts, bagels, fruit, pretzels, cookies, chips, muffins, and similar items;

NOTE: When a majority of the attendees (at least 51%) are in a travel status (see Appendix A), refreshments may be provided for all attendees (including local attendees).

6. Printing;
7. Registration fees;
8. Ground transportation; and
9. Attendees' travel and time cost.

G. Cost Comparisons. (FTR §301-74.4) When planning a conference, DoD Agencies must do cost comparisons to ensure the greatest benefit to the Government. Cost comparisons include:

1. Determination of adequacy of lodging at the established per diem rate;
2. Overall convenience;

3. Fees;
4. Meeting space availability;
5. Equipment availability, e.g., audiovisual, fax;
6. Commuting or travel distance of most attendees; and
7. Other conference expenses.

H. Conference Site Selection (FTR §301-74.5)

1. Documentation. (FTR §301-74.19) DoD Agencies must maintain a record of the cost of each alternative conference site considered for each conference sponsored or funded, in whole or in part, for 30 or more attendees. A minimum of three sites must be considered for the conference and the documentation must be available for inspection by the Office of the Inspector General or other interested parties.
2. Locality Per Diem Rate. (FTR §301-74.6; 74.7) Initial selection of a location must be based on the established per diem rate; however, to provide DoD flexibility in the selection of the appropriate lodging facility at the most advantageous location, the lodging portion of the established per diem rate may be exceeded by up to 25 percent, if necessary. For example, if the established geographical lodging portion of the per diem rate is \$100, then facilities with lodging rates up to \$125 may be considered when selecting the conference location.
3. Conducted in the District of Columbia. (FTR §301-74.17) Prior to scheduling, contact should be made with the GSA Public Buildings Service (PBS) of the National Capital Region to inquire about the availability of short-term conference and meeting facilities in the District of Columbia. A Customer Desk Guide can be found at the following website:
http://www.gsa.gov/attachments/GSA_PUBLICATIONS/pub/CustomerGuidebookmarkedversion.pdf.
NOTE: *This website is case sensitive.*

I. Requirements for Attendance, Sponsoring or Funding a Conference at a Place of Public Accommodation (FTR §301-74.14; 74.15)

1. Attendance at a conference must be authorized by an official designated through the Secretarial Process.
2. Sponsoring or funding a conference by a DoD component at a place of public accommodations must be authorized by an official designated through the Secretarial Process.
3. When sponsoring or funding a conference, in whole or in part, at a place of public accommodation in the U.S., FEMA-approved accommodations must be used, unless the official designated through the Secretarial Process for authorizing the sponsoring and/or funding of a conference makes a written determination on an individual case basis that waiver of the requirement to use FEMA-approved accommodations is necessary and in the public interest for a particular event.

J. Advertisement or Application Form for Conference Attendance. (FTR §301-74.16) Any advertisement or application for attendance at a conference sponsored or funded by a DoD Agency must include notice:

- *1. That attendees must use FEMA-approved places of public accommodation unless a waiver has been issued as indicated in par. C4950-F3, and
2. Of the prohibition of use of non FEMA-approved places of public accommodation to all non-Federal entities, e.g., contractors, to which the DoD Agency provides Federal funds.

K. Selection of Attendees. DoD must establish policies that reduce the overall cost of attending a conference. The policies and procedures must:

1. Limit the Agency's representation to the minimum number of attendees necessary to accomplish the Agency's mission; and
2. Provide for the consideration of travel expenses when selecting attendees.

L. Conference Administrative Costs. Conference administrative costs may not be included in an attendee's per diem allowance payment for attendance at a conference. Per diem is intended only to reimburse the attendee's subsistence expenses. Administrative costs must be paid separately.

M. Conference Lodging Allowance. The Conference Lodging Allowance is a pre-determined allowance of up to 125 percent of the applicable locality lodging per diem rate (rounded to the next highest dollar) and:

1. Is not an actual expense allowance,
2. May not be used if the lodging rate exceeds the established lodging allowance by more than 25 per cent, and
3. May not be used concurrently with the actual expense method of reimbursement.

N. Conference Lodging Allowance Approval Authority (FTR, §301-74.24)

1. Government Sponsored Conference. (FTR, §301-74.8) Only a designated senior official of the sponsoring agency may determine that a conference lodging allowance is necessary, and authorize the conference lodging allowance rate. All agencies must use that rate in reimbursing their attendees' lodging expenses.
2. Non-government Sponsored Conference. (FTR, §301-74.9) The AO may authorize a member to be reimbursed for lodging expenses incurred up to the conference lodging allowance rate.

NOTE: If the Conference Lodging Allowance is inadequate, see JTR, Chapter, 4, Part M, for actual expense reimbursement authorization procedures.

O. Conference M&IE Rate

1. Light Refreshments. When light refreshments are furnished at nominal or no cost by the Government, no deduction of the attendee's M&IE allowance is permitted.
2. Meals Included in Registration Fee. When one or two meals are furnished at nominal or no cost by the Government, or are included in the registration fee, the proportional meal rate applies for each day meals are furnished.

C4955 CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

A. General. Employees may attend and participate in conferences/meetings of recognized professional organizations to maintain and further their professional competency at Government expense (including TDY expenses), subject to the availability of funds and the employees' work responsibilities.

B. Authority. Title 5 USC §4110 authorizes conference attendance expenditures for meetings concerned with the functions and activities of the DoD component which contribute to improved conduct, supervision, or management of the component's functions and activities. This authority applies to attendance at technical, scientific, professional, or similar private membership non-Federal societies and organizations (38 Comp. Gen. 800 (1959)).

This authority is independent of the training authority included in par. C4500 unless it is administratively determined that training is the primary purpose of attendance at a meeting.

C. Government Sponsored Conferences. Attendance at Government expense may be authorized for the following:

1. Conferences sponsored or cosponsored by a Federal agency at which an employee's attendance is required in the performance of official duties;
2. Conferences of state/municipals government organizations, or of international agencies in which the Federal Government is officially participating, and the employee's attendance is related to official duties or for the purpose of transacting DoD business;
3. Conferences of a group of individuals representing private interests, but convened for the purpose of transacting business directly related to the DoD functions or activities and attendance is in the employee's official performance; and
4. Similar activities.

D. Non-government Sponsored Conferences

1. General. Conference attendance for non-Federal technical, scientific, professional, and comparable private membership organizations is subject to the conditions in pars. C4955-D2, C4955-D3 and C4955-D4.
2. Attendance and Approval Requirements. Attendee selection and approval are subject to regulations of the separate DoD Components consistent with the regulations on Acceptance of Payment from a Non-Federal Source for Travel Expenses (see the Joint Ethics Regulation (JER), DoD 5500.7-R, at http://www.defenselink.mil/dodgc/defense_ethics/ethics_regulation/index.html).
3. Purpose. Employees may attend conferences at Government expense to:
 - a. Further the programs of their DoD components;
 - b. Present scientific and technical papers which further the development of the U.S. resources; and
 - c. Maintain an effective professional, scientific, technical, managerial, and supervisory workforce.
4. Security. An appropriate security officer at the activity concerned should examine security implications for attendance at all meetings and conferences conducted or sponsored by private or international organizations. Employees who attend such meetings must be briefed about security implications, when necessary, prior to attendance.

E. Registration Fees and Miscellaneous Expenses

1. When Travel is Involved. Registration fees authorized in the travel authorization or approved on a travel claim voucher are reimbursable. The proportional meal rate applies on any day that the cost for one or two meals is included in the registration fee (see par. C4554-B). Information should be included on the travel authorization as to whether or not the registration fee includes charges for meals, and if so, the number of meals and the dates on which furnished. When the registration fee includes lodgings without charge, only the applicable proportional per diem or TDY locality M&IE rate prescribed in <https://secureapp2.hqda.pentagon.mil/perdiem/perdiemrates.html> is paid.

2. When No Travel is Involved. The registration fee may be reimbursed when attendance is authorized for a conference in the local area that:

- a. Does not involve travel,
- b. Does not involve per diem, and
- c. For which a travel order is not issued,

3. Limitation on Reimbursement for Meal Costs when Attending a Conference/Meeting Sponsored by a DoD Component. The cost of each meal, whether included in a registration fee or contracted for separately, at a DoD-sponsored conference/meeting must be identified. The total amount paid by the Government for meals cannot exceed the locality meal rate prescribed for the TDY assignment location (if travel is involved) or the meeting location (when travel is not involved), unless AEA reimbursement for the meal(s) involved has been authorized/approved in accordance with Chapter 4, Part C. When travel is involved, the maximum contracted amount for 1 or 2 meals cannot exceed the difference between the locality meal rate and the PMR.

4. Miscellaneous Expenses. Independent charges/fees for light refreshments/snacks are not a reimbursable expense.

Charges/fees for light refreshments/snacks are reimbursable ONLY when included as part of the conference registration fee.

F. Membership Fees and Dues. A DoD component may pay membership fees or dues from appropriated funds when the membership is in the Government's interest and the membership is in the DoD component's name (e.g., Per Diem Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee) (31 Comp. Gen. 398 (1952); 33 id. 126 (1953)).

G. Entertainment Expenses. Entertainment expenses for social events and other personal expenses not directly required by official duties are not reimbursable.

Effective 3 March 2005

*H. Guidance from the Comptroller General of the United States Concerning Reasonable Conference Costs Including Meals and Light Refreshments at a Formal Conference. Following is the Digest portion of the Comptroller General decision (B-300826, 3 March 2005) rendered to the National Institutes of Health concerning reasonable conference costs. The complete decision is available at:
<http://www.gao.gov/decisions/appro/300826.htm>

Decision

Matter of: National Institutes of Health - Food at Government-Sponsored Conferences

File: B-300826

Date: March 3, 2005

DIGEST

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) may pay for legitimate, reasonable conference costs, including meals and light refreshments, of a formal conference pertaining to Parkinson's disease subject to the conditions outlined herein. A formal conference typically involves topical matters of interest to, and participation of, multiple agencies and/or nongovernmental participants. In addition, other indicators of a formal conference include registration, a published substantive agenda, and scheduled speakers or discussion panels. An agency hosting a formal conference may consider the cost of providing meals and refreshments to conference attendees an allowable conference cost so long as (1) meals and refreshments are incidental to the conference, (2) attendance at the meals and when refreshments are provided is important for the host agency to ensure full participation in essential discussions, lectures, or

speeches concerning the purpose of the conference, and (3) the meals and refreshments are part of a formal conference that includes not just the meals and refreshments and discussions, speeches, or other business that may take place when the meals and refreshments are served, but also includes substantial functions occurring separately from when the food is served. The NIH conference here satisfies these three criteria. Without statutory authority to charge a fee and retain the proceeds, NIH may not charge a registration or other fee to defray the costs of providing meals or light refreshments. An appropriation establishes a maximum authorized program level, and an agency, without specific statutory authority, may not augment its appropriations from sources outside the government. In applying this decision, NIH should develop an agency policy specifying the types of formal conferences at which NIH may consider providing food. NIH also should develop procedures to ensure that the provision of meals and refreshments meet the criteria listed above. We expect agency counsels, as well as certifying officers, agency auditors, and Inspectors General, to apply these criteria. To the extent that agency officials are uncertain as to the applicability of the criteria in particular circumstances, they may request a decision from this office, pursuant to 31 USC §3529, before proceeding.

***C4956 GUIDANCE FOR CONFERENCE PLANNING (FTR, Chap 301, App. E)**

A. Terms

1. Conference: A meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium or event that involves attendee travel. The term “conference” also applies to training activities that are conferences under 5 CFR §410.404.
2. Conference lodging allowance: The rate that is up to 25 percent above the established lodging per diem rate.
3. Milestone schedule: Deadlines, which need to be reached in a progressive and orderly manner.
4. Planner: The person designated to oversee the conference.
5. Planning committee: Operational group significantly contributing to a conference’s overall success and able to fully reflect the needs of both the agency and the attendees.

B. Getting Started. Depending on the conference size, type, and intended effect, start planning a minimum of one year in advance. Designate a planner and a planning committee.

C. Planning Committee. Planning committee functions typically include:

1. Establishing a set of objectives, and
2. Developing a theme, and
3. Making recommendations for location, agenda, dates, and logistics, e.g., schedule, exhibits, speaker, and
4. Making suggestions as to who should attend, and
5. Serving as communications link between planners and participants, and
6. Evaluation and follow-up, and
7. Similar functions.

D. Milestone Schedule

1. Develop a milestone schedule, which is essential to conference planning, by working backward from the beginning date of the conference to include each major step. Examples include:

- a. Planning committee meetings.
- b. Preparation of mailing lists.
- c. Letters of invitation.
- d. Designation of speakers.
- e. Confirmation letters to speakers.
- f. Confirmation with site selection official.
- g. Preparation of agenda.
- h. Preparation of specification sheet.
- i. Location and date selection.
- j. Exhibits.
- k. Budget.
- l. Printing requirements.
- m. Signage.
- n. Conference information packages.
- o. Scheduling photographer (if planned).
- p. Use of agency seal and conference logo.
- q. Handicapped requirements.
- r. Planning of meals and refreshments, if appropriate.

2. Establish completion dates for each major step.

3. Update and revise the schedule as needed.

E. Specification Sheet. A detailed specification sheet is necessary to:

1. Identify essential elements of a conference which typically include:

a. Sleeping rooms and on-site food services. It is generally best to estimate on the low side for the number of sleeping rooms and meals to be prepared. Facilities, unless there is only limited available space, are usually prepared to increase the number of sleeping rooms and meals; however, they discourage—and in some cases penalize—if the sleeping room and meal guarantees are not met, and

b. Meeting rooms, and

c. Exhibit facilities, and

d. Audio-visual equipment and support services, and

e. Miscellaneous support services, and

f. Sleeping rooms with amenities, e.g., Internet access, data ports, conference call, and voice mail, and

g. Similar specifications.

2. Determine costs:

a. Procurement. Bring contracting officer into the process early. All agreements and decisions should be written and agreed to by the agency-contracting officer before being sent to the facility.

b. Government per diem rates. The Government per diem rate applies to Federal attendees. Application of it to non-Federal attendees is at the discretion of the property and conference negotiator.

c. Registration fee. Generally, the registration fee covers all direct expenditures of agency funds for planning and organization of a conference, e.g., meeting room accommodations, meals, light refreshments (if appropriate), speaker fees, publications, and materials. Anything directly relating to the conference, except liquor, can be included in the fee. To estimate the registration fee, divide the proposed budget by the estimated number of attendees.

F. Budgeting. Decide who pays for the conference expenses (other than sleeping room accommodations and individual meals), i.e., by the attendee from a training or registration fee, or directly by the agency.

G. Conference Site Selection. Minimize total costs, all factors considered.

H. Geographic Location. In determining where to locate the conference, consider:

1. Targeted audience.

2. Total costs, including per diem, transportation, and other.

3. Accessibility by car or air.

4. Whether recreational activities are necessary.

5. The expense of desired facility (significant savings can be achieved in off-season periods).

I. Facility Types

1. Federal Government. Use Government-owned or Government-provided conference facilities to the maximum extent possible.

2. Convention centers. Excellent for very large meetings, trade shows and exhibits; usually located near a large number of hotels.
3. Conference centers. Dedicated meeting facilities; good for smaller meetings when numerous breakout sessions are planned.
4. Colleges and universities. Many have good meeting facilities and can offer sleeping accommodations when school is not in session.
5. Hotels. Commercial facilities that may be used to meet all conference needs or just the room night needs.

J. Date Selection. For availability and economical reasons, the best months are April, May, September, October, and November. Book the facility as early as possible to increase the chances of getting the desired date. However, pay particular attention to commitments for September or October due to fiscal year budget considerations.

K. Considerations when Choosing a Site

1. Is the facility:
 - a. Cost effective, e.g., are Government rates honored?
 - b. Safe, e.g., FEMA-approved?
 - c. Secure (i.e., on-site security personnel?
 - d. Easily reached from an airport or by car?
 - e. Clean?
 - f. Well run, e.g., does the staff seem to be competent and responsive?
 - g. Laid out in a functional way?
 - h. Large enough to supply the number of sleeping rooms required?
 - i. Set up to provide necessary conference registration equipment?
 - j. Handicapped accessible?
2. Parking:
 - a. Is it adequate?
 - b. How close to the facility is it?
 - c. Is it secure and safe?
 - d. Is the cost separate?

3. Sleeping rooms:

- a. Will the facility make the reservations, or else who is responsible for making the reservations for participants?
- b. What are the facility's registration rules?
- c. What are departure rules?

4. Meeting room functionality:

- a. Is appropriate space available?
- b. What costs are involved?
- c. Is needed equipment available (i.e., for conference registration, faxes, phones, computers, copiers)? Do not rent equipment unless it is absolutely unrealistic to bring it.
- d. Are rooms designated for agency use for the duration of the conference?
- e. Are there columns that can block views?
- f. Are ceilings high enough for audio-video equipment?
- g. Are rooms suitable for both classroom and/or theatre setups?
- h. Are there windows? Shades?
- i. Are there manually controlled thermostats?
- j. Are rooms handicapped accessible?
- k. Where are electrical outlets?
- l. Can the rooms be darkened?
- m. Would it be more economical to bring audio-visual equipment?
- n. Does the facility want meeting schedules and room layouts in writing in advance of the conference?
- o. If necessary, can the rooms be entered the evening before for an early setup?
- p. Will the facility arrange for room setup if given a layout?
- q. What set-up costs are included?
- r. What are departure rules?

5. Exhibits:

- a. If exhibits are planned, is suitable exhibit space available?

- b. Are easels available at no cost?
- c. What are the put-up and takedown times?
- d. What costs are involved?
- e. What about pre-delivery and after-conference arrangements?
- f. If exhibits are shipped, know where and to whom they are to be sent.
- g. If bringing large exhibits, determine location of loading dock, appropriate entrances and elevators.
- h. Are there additional handling fees?
- i. Check hotel policy on posting, size and appearance of signs.

L. Food and Drink

1. Meals

- a. Generally, appropriated funds cannot be used to pay for meals for employees at their official duty stations.
- b. Employees on TDY travel may be served meals but cannot be reimbursed for those provided at government expense.
- c. Clarify in advance the appropriate per diem reduction(s) of meal(s) allowance(s) for TDY travel.
- d. Pay, or reimburse, as desired an employee for meals as necessary expenses incident to an authorized training program (under the Government Employees Training Act (GETA) at 5 USC §4104(4)), if a determination has been made that essential training must be conducted during the meal.
- e. Work closely with the hotel to plan quality menus that fit within authorized per diem rates.
- f. Clarify and agree in advance to the number of meal guarantees.
- g. Ensure that gratuities and service charges are added to the cost of each meal, and determine the method of billing to be used (e.g., signed guarantee, collected meal tickets, or actual quantities consumed).
- h. Confirm menus.

2. Breaks and Refreshments. Breaks should last no longer than 30 minutes and take place between meeting sessions. The following should also be considered when planning for refreshments:

- a. Keep in mind that everyone does not drink coffee or tea.
- b. Clarify and agree in advance that coffee and pastries, if appropriate, are purchased by the gallon and dozen.
- c. Try to avoid a per person charge.

- d. Negotiate the cost into the contract.
- e. Be conservative in estimates. There are seldom 100 percent of the conference participants attending any one function.
- f. If coffee, soft drinks, and water are not included in the fee, are they available “at cost” to the attendee?

M. Account Reconciliation. It is important to request that the hotel bill be prepared in a logical and chronological sequence, and that backup data accompany the bill. Generally, the hotel completes its accounting of the conference within two weeks of the conclusion.

N. Notification

1. Announcement and/or Invitations. Announcement of the planned conference should be made as early as possible, even one year in advance; invitation letters, 8 weeks in advance. They should include:

- a. Point of contact name and telephone number.
- b. Registration form, card, or Internet address (include space for identifying handicapped requirements).
- c. Registration instructions.
- d. Registration deadline date.
- e. Detailed area map and driving instructions.
- f. Information on traffic patterns to avoid rush hour delays.
- g. Promotional brochures from the facility.
- h. Layout of facility including telephone numbers.
- i. Breakdown of costs showing any difference from travel versus training object classes, particularly meal costs, so that proper reimbursement can be made.
- j. Agenda with a list of speakers and topics.
- k. Activity schedule for spouses and guests (all charges or costs attributed to spouses or guests must be borne by the individual attendee (not reimbursable by the Government)).
- l. Provide a sample travel voucher.
- m. Notice that the conference lodging allowance applies if applicable.
- n. Similar information.

2. Confirmations. A designated person or group should:

- a. Decide on the speaker(s) and the message to be conveyed and obtain early commitment(s) in writing.
- b. Confirm conference dates/times/topics/arrival and departure times with speaker(s) and any other special guests at least 30 days in advance.

- c. Conduct a final planning committee meeting to confirm all plans.
- d. Confirm photographer's schedule.
- e. Confirm hotel plans at least one day in advance.

O. Facility Process

- 1. Check-In and-Out.
 - a. Streamline the process:
 - b. Does the facility need additional personnel?
 - c. Is electronic one-stop processing available?
 - d. Is luggage storage and shuttle service available?
 - e. Arrange parking for any special guests.
- 2. Provide signage.

P. Registration Process. Registration is generally the attendees' introduction to the conference. Give it special attention by:

- 1. Using directional signs.
- 2. Placing especially attractive or important exhibits nearby.
- 3. Planning for late arrivals.
- 4. Using state-of-the-art processing.
- 5. Checking out the registration capabilities of using GSA's electronic Smart Pay System.
- 6. Providing for handicapped attendees.

Q. Conference Information Package. Each registrant should be given a conference information package. Used regularly during the conference, the conference information package should be accurate, beneficial, and reflect detailed information on a daily/hourly basis. If time allows, try to finalize the package and send it to the printer at least 4 weeks in advance of the starting date. The program is ordinarily widely used, so print twice as many copies of the program there are expected attendees. The information package, for example, may contain:

- 1. A list of everything in the package.
- 2. A "welcome" letter.
- 3. A schedule.

4. Workshop agendas.
5. Discussion of exhibits.
6. Panelists' information.
7. Photos and biographies of speakers/special guests.
8. Facility layout and list of services available.
9. Identify designated smoking areas.
10. Special events.
11. Message center information.
12. Area map.
13. Other pertinent material.

NOTE: Use of the agency seal and conference logo may be considered for the conference package. However, the decision to use such items is strictly the judgment of agency officials.

R. Miscellaneous

1. Suggested Room Coordination. Plan ahead to setup:
 - a. Staff room to handle core of activities;
 - b. Meal functions;
 - c. Exhibit rooms, and
 - d. Meeting rooms—
 - (1) Theatre or auditorium for lectures;
 - (2) Facing speaker when note taking is important;
 - (3) Square or U-shaped style for discussion/interaction; and
 - (4) Banquet or roundtable for discussion.
2. Keeping in Touch. Plan for:
 - a. A message center to be set up in a central location for special announcements and telephone messages.
 - b. How to reach whomever at all times—use beepers and walkie-talkies.
 - c. Clear identification of conference staff.
 - d. Accommodation of physically impaired attendees with sign language or other special needs.

3. Mementos. Appropriations are not available to purchase memento items for distribution to conference attendees as a remembrance of an event. Two notable exceptions to the memento or gift prohibition are under training and awards. Work closely with appropriate agency officials to make final determinations.

S. Resources. The following resources may be of assistance in planning a conference:

1. An agency contracting officer;
2. Travel Management Centers;
3. Interagency Travel Management Committee members (a forum of agency travel policy managers—for member identification, contact the agency's administrative or financial office);
4. State Chambers of Commerce or Visitors Bureaus;
5. Local chapters of the Society of Government Meeting Professionals; and
6. Private industry conference planners.

T. Conclusion. Process:

1. Questionnaires, which may provide invaluable feedback about the success of the conference.
2. Training certificates.
3. Thank-you notes to participants, facility personnel, speakers, printers, photographers, and other special contributors.
4. Summary to acknowledge the accomplishments, and to convey the information discussed to a wider audience, may be an excellent promotional tool.